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## Personalia

of the Department of Anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley, where he became a member of one of the strongest groups of Africanist anthropologists in North America.

Shack retired in 1991, receiving Berkeley's highest commendation, the Berkeley Citation. In addition to his scholarship, he had also served the university as chair of its Anthropology Department, as faculty assistant to the vice-chancellor on affirmative action, and from 1979 to 1985 as Dean of the Graduate Division. His commitment to academic service was also testified to by his chairing, for ten years (1987–1996), the International African Institute in London, having previously (1979–1984) acted as a Consultant Editor to the institute's journal *Africa*.

Shack was also honored by the French government and by his *alma mater*, the University of Chicago. The former named him a Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite; while the Alumni Association of the latter awarded him its Distinguished Service Award.

The International African Institute is re-issuing *The Gurage* in its series "Classics in African Anthropology." Also forthcoming is a monograph from the University of California Press, which reflects Shack's interests in the arts and music: *Harlem in Montmartre: a Paris Jazz Story between the Great Wars*.

He is survived by his wife Dorothy and his son Hailu.

## In memoriam Tekle Tsadik Mekouria (1913–2000)

RITA PANKHURST

The Ethiopian historian, Tekle Tsadik Mekouria (Täklä Şadəq Mäk<sup>w</sup>ərya), was born in Asagərt, in the vicinity of Ankobär, Northern Šäwa, on the first day of 1906 A.Mis. (11 September 1913), and died in Addis Ababa on 23 July 2000, at the age of eighty-seven after a long illness. He was buried at the Church of Qäranyo Mädhane ʿAläm, his funeral oration being delivered by *Däğğazmač* Zäwde Gäbrä-Šəllase. Tekle Tsadik played a significant part in

the Imperial government, and also in the first years of the Revolution, when he was elected Chairman of the Conference drafting a new Constitution.

Notwithstanding his contributions to post-war Ethiopian government, he will best be remembered as Ethiopia's first modern historian, or, in Professor Bahru Zewde's words, "a bridge" between such earlier writers as Aläqa Ašme, Aläqa Tayye and Blattəngeta Hərüy on the one hand, and the later, post-war professionally trained Ethiopian historians, on the other.

Tekle Tsadik's parents were both from priestly families. His father, Mäkurya Gulte, had been the *Märigeta* of Täklä Haymanot Church in Janamora, where he was born. Later, through the influence of his distant relative and fellow countryman, *Däggazmač*, later *Bitwäddäd*, Wäldä Šadəq Gošu, then Minister of Interior, *Märigeta* Mäkurya became one of the *däbtära* of Rufa'el Church in Gulele, Addis Ababa. In 1912 A.Mis. (1919/20), he brought Tekle Tsadik, then a boy of six or seven, to the capital, placing him in the school attached to that Church, where he received a traditional church education, which comprises the learning of Gə'əz and calligraphy, liturgical chant and poetry. When Tekle Tsadik was twelve or thirteen, another fellow countryman of his father's, *Bäğəron*d Māngaša Gäbrä Iyäsus, thought the boy could benefit from modern education, and tried to enroll him in the Menelik II School and, as there was no place available there, in the new Tafari Makonnen School. However, there was no place for him there either, and so the *Bäğəron*d took him to the Alliance Française School. This did not please Tekle Tsadik's father, who was afraid his son would become a Roman Catholic, and so, after six months of introduction to modern education, he was put back in the Rufa'el church school. In 1921 A.Mis. (1928/9) his father placed him in the service of *Bitwäddäd* Wäldä Šadəq, to become acquainted with court and state affairs. Growing adept at the art of writing official letters he came to act as Wäldä Šadəq's private secretary. At the age of 19, he entered into an arranged marriage to *Wäyzäro* Kassaye Dästa, the celebrations being held in the *Bitwäddäd*'s house.

However, he was determined to gain access to modern education and to learn a foreign language. He thus left his post to enroll at last in Tafari Makonnen School, where teaching was in French. Having reached Grade Six in less than three years, he abandoned his studies to avoid being recruited into the then newly-established Military Academy at Holäta, outside Addis Ababa, and returned to the service of Wäldä Šadəq.

During the persecution of young Ethiopian intellectuals in Addis Ababa following the attempt on the life of the Italian Vice-Roy Graziani in February 1937, Tekle Tsadik, along with many other young Ethiopians, was arrested, and taken to the prison camp at Danane, on the Indian Ocean coast near Mogadishu in Italian Somaliland. Here he took the opportunity of learning Italian and revealed his interest in history by carefully recording the names of all those who were at the camp. He was among a group released in late 1939, and, because of his fluency in Italian, was employed by the Italian authorities as a translator at Amaya, near Ambo, west of the capital, until the end of 1940.

After the Liberation in May 1941 he tried his hand at business for a few months, but was not successful. The progressive Minister of Education, Mäkwännän Dästa, then employed him, on the recommendation of Ar'aya Wäraṭa, who had been with Tekle Tsadik in the Danane prison camp. His assignment was to translate an Italian book — the four-volume *Storia di Abyssinia*, (Rome, 1936–38), by Luca Pietromarchi, an Italian diplomat who wrote under the pseudonym of Luca dei Sabelli. While rising rapidly within the Ministry, Tekle Tsadik continued his translations, taking notes for himself. In 1943 A.Mis. (1950/1) a meeting was held in the Ministry to discuss the shortage of textbooks for students, and particularly of history books. It stimulated Tekle Tsadik to write, in Amharic, his first historical monograph, *Yä-Ityopiya tarik kä-Aše Tewodros askä Qädamawi Haylä Šällase* (History of Ethiopia from Emperor Tewodros to Haylä Šällase). He wished to demonstrate that Ethiopians could write their own history in their own language. As Shiferaw Bekele has pointed out, he succeeded in presenting Ethiopian history from an Ethiopian, rather than the Eurocentric point of view prevalent at that time. Mäkwännän Dästa took the draft to be approved by the Emperor, who ordered it to be studied by a committee appointed for the purpose at the Ministry of the Pen. Much to Tekle Tsadik's exasperation the Committee took months to approve it. It was eventually published in 1945/6, and Tekle Tsadik was promoted to the rank of Secretary-General. During his period of office in the Ministry he also opposed what he considered the imperialist influence of the British in the Ethiopian educational system, and succeeded in having British teachers replaced by those from other English-speaking countries.

His services were now in demand by the Ministry of the Pen, but his own Minister was unwilling to release him. The dispute led to Tekle Tsadik being appointed to neither ministry. Instead he was assigned, again as Secretary-General, to the Franco-Ethiopian Railway Company, a post he ac-

cepted with some reluctance. He decided to concentrate on writing, and published two monographs on cultural history *Kä-ṭa'at amlako wädä Krästana* (From the Worship of Idols to Christianity) and *Yä-säw ṭabadana abro yämānor zāde* (The Character of Man and the Art of Living in Society).

There followed his first posting abroad, in 1952, as First Secretary at the Ethiopian Embassy in Paris. He was given two years' paid leave that enabled him to pursue research at the Bibliothèque Nationale. The results of his studies, begun before he went abroad, were three further volumes, taking Ethiopian history back from the period of Tewodros to pre-Aksumite times. They were published over a six-year period between 1952/3 and 1958/9. This first of his two historical series was the principal comprehensive history of Ethiopia then available in Amharic, and came to be widely read by adult Ethiopians interested in their history, and, as prescribed texts, in schools. As Ethiopian history was not at that time in the curriculum, the texts were studied in Amharic reading and grammar classes. Tekle Tsadik's ability to present historical events in a clear and comprehensible fashion contributed to the popularity of his writings.

Recalled to Addis Ababa in 1957, he was appointed Director-General at the Ministry of Pensions. During the two years he spent in this post he devoted much of his attention to early and medieval Ethiopian history. He published a study of Egyptian, Sabaeen, and Ethiopian scripts and a history of Ethiopia and Egypt. This covered the reigns of four ancient Egyptian rulers, including the southern, or Nubian, rulers, whom he associated with the beginnings of Ethiopian history. It was also at this time that he published the third and fourth volumes of his first series of historical studies. Subsequently, in 1959, he became briefly the Head of the National Library and the Archaeological Department, under the Ministry of Education, with the rank of Assistant Minister. For the latter department he prepared rules and regulations, on which the later Antiquities Department was based.

In early 1960 he was again sent abroad, this time to Jerusalem, as Consul-General, with the rank of Minister. Able, once more to study sources of Ethiopian history, he wrote his first work in French, *L'empereur Zera Yaicob et sa lettre à la communauté éthiopienne de Jérusalem*. He also published, three years after the December 1960 coup d'état in Ethiopia — which he had welcomed by opening a bottle of champagne — an allegory on inequality in the animal kingdom entitled *Les animaux ouvriers et aristocrates*. A publisher in France had earlier had the audacity to attempt to correct the text before offering to publish it, an offer Tekle Tsadik had for that reason declined.

After five years in Jerusalem, he was recalled. Uncertain of his reception, instead of returning to Addis Ababa, he handed over his duties in Israel, and left for Paris, writing to the Emperor that he was undergoing medical treatment and was working on a book on Ahmäd Grañ. However, after a year, he decided to risk returning to Ethiopia, and was rewarded with an Ambassadorship to Yugoslavia (1965). There he produced a learned discourse, in French, on baptismal, personal and throne names of royal personages from the 13th to the 20th centuries. Unfortunately this valuable mimeographed study was never published, though, in 1967, his slim volume, *L'Église d'Éthiopie*, written in September 1964, was published in Paris.

In the early 1970s Tekle Tsadik took up his last post prior to the Revolution, as Minister of State of the Antiquities Administration, where he was given responsibility for controlling and administering important historical sites, in particular, Aksum, Lalibäla and Gondär. He played an important and creative role at this time, in encouraging archaeological research. He was also entrusted with the chairmanship of the Committee drafting the second volume of Emperor Ḥaylä Šəllase's Autobiography. Also during this period, reflecting on the danger to Ethiopia of ignoring the powerful Arab and Muslim world — as well as Ethiopian Muslims — in favour of close ties with Israel, he published his massive volume on the expeditions of Imam Ahmäd Ibrahim, known in Ethiopia as Grañ (the left-handed), showing how the Imam's strength had been underestimated.

In 1974, in the early stages of the Ethiopian Revolution, he was appointed Minister of Education, but, because of disagreements between the Government and the Derg, his appointment was withdrawn. Instead he was appointed Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, a post he was pleased to occupy, though in the event it was only for a short period. Already when he was in charge of Antiquities he had proposed the establishment of such a ministry, to protect the national heritage, including church treasures, and with an awareness of the possibilities of tourism. In March he was also appointed to the Constitutional Conference convened to revise the 1955 Constitution, and was elected its Chairman. However, the new Constitution drafted by the Conference was never promulgated. Less than a year after becoming Minister of Culture, following the execution of sixty dignitaries by the Derg in November 1974, Tekle Tsadik asked permission to retire on account of his age, and, through the intervention of the then Head of State, Täfäri Bante, was allowed to do so a month later.

In the following decade Tekle Tsadik completed his autobiography, a task he undertook at the insistence of his sons. He saw no value in it, believing that his record in public life, and his writings, would speak for themselves, but his sons argued that he should record his life and thoughts. Accordingly he showed his son, Dr. Šimälləs Tāklä Šadəq, a two-page outline in 1976. When Dr. Šimälləs, returned from the United States on a visit in 1985, the 265-page biography had been written. His sons are presently preparing it for publication.

Tekle Tsadik strongly supported the UNESCO initiative for a *General History of Africa*. His contributions, on Christian Aksum, and on the Horn of Africa, were published in the 1980s. He also did his best, when funds permitted, to take part in the triennial International Conferences of Ethiopian Studies, convened at various international centres of such studies. He was able to attend, and read papers at, the fifth, (Nice 1977, on the invitation of the convener, Joseph Tubiana), the eighth, (Addis Ababa 1984) and the tenth (Paris 1988).

In 1976/7, under the auspices of the then Prime Minister, Fəqrä Šəllase Wäg-Dāräs, who was a keen proponent of Ethiopian unity, at a time when this was under threat, Tekle Tsadik was able to pursue his ambition to carry out more detailed research in the National Archives of France, Britain and Italy in preparation for a new and fuller history of the modern unifying rulers of Ethiopia. He had hoped also to visit the Russian archives, but was unable to obtain a visa.

He returned to Europe in 1981, visiting Italy, France and Britain, and travelling for the first time to the United States. Access to foreign archives resulted in a much more professional historical approach. His trilogy on the reigns of Emperors Tewodros, Yohannəs and Mənilək, in the context of Ethiopian unity, published 1988/9 to 1990/1, was well researched and had footnotes, illustrations and appendices. These works were to crown his writing career and mark its end. Asked by my husband, Richard Pankhurst, why he did not bring his detailed history of Ethiopia more up to date, he declared himself tired. Smiling wryly, he dismissed Ləğ Iyasu as “insignificant”, and expressed unwillingness to move further into the history of his own times.

Although educated in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Tekle Tsadik was not a fervent adherent, seeing its importance as a cultural institution rather than as a faith. Never interested in acquiring land or money, he told his children that they would get only education from him. “What you will inherit is knowledge and good example”, he said. He sent one of his sons to

the Swedish Evangelical School, from where he entered the prestigious Haile Sellassie I Secondary School. His other sons followed in his footsteps at the Tafari Makonnen School, and continued their studies in the USA. Though at times hot-tempered, Tekle Tsadik was a good father to his sons. He would play draughts and table-tennis with them, and would tell them stories in the evenings, though in front of visitors this was not often the case. Having had no daughters he was pleased to raise three granddaughters.

Tekle Tsadik was a punctilious civil servant, who took his responsibilities seriously, including regular attendance at innumerable committees. He was always conscious of the needs of his country and people, and this led him often to a critical attitude towards the governments under which he served. He was a man of integrity and a reformer by temperament, 'born modern', as one of his sons expressed it. That he was widely respected became evident when, at a time when the country was in crisis, the thirty-member Constitutional Conference elected him as their chairman. In 1991 he was nominated for a prize as 'best Ethiopian historian' by Addis Ababa University, and received it at the Tenth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. The following year he was accorded the honour of giving out diplomas to graduates of Addis Ababa University.

Despite his busy life as a public servant Tekle Tsadik remained true to his vocation as an historian of Ethiopia. Self-taught, he was happy to write all his main works in his mother tongue, of which he was a master, and was heard to declare: 'We have our own language and history and here are the foreign historians writing about us in Italian and French'. When necessary he could, and did, write in French and, later in his life also learnt English. Even when on duty as a public servant he could at times betray his preoccupation with history. On one occasion when I was working at the National Library of Ethiopia during his tenure as its Head, I entered his office wearing a bright yellow overall. He looked at it steadily for a while and then murmured: 'That was the colour of Ahmäd Grāñ's flag'. As Bällātu Kābbādā observed, after interviewing him, he talked about historical personages as though he knew them intimately, and his knowledge ranged over the entire span of Ethiopian history. Living frugally, he managed to collect a number of Ethiopian artifacts and historical paintings. His greatest interest, however, was in collecting books. In the course of time he built up a valuable library on Ethiopia, which, sadly, was dispersed towards the end of his life.

Though 'modern' in his outlook, Tekle Tsadik was nevertheless a product of the Ethiopian society of his time, with its traditional culture, courtesies



and attitudes. It took the arrival of a grandchild, Theo Eshetu to reconcile him to one of his sons marrying a foreigner. In an effort to understand Ethiopia, Theo, a notable cinematographer, raised in Italy, whose first camera was a gift from his grandfather, made a film of Ethiopia using his profession to see the country through his grandfather's eyes. Tekle Tsadik was an independent thinker, proud of his country's independence and achievements, which he wanted to make known through his writings. He was one of the first scholars to sign the petition for the return from Italy of the looted Aksum Obelisk, and would have rejoiced to see it back.

No longer to be seen driving through the town in his ancient red Volkswagen, a slender, neatly dressed figure wearing a felt hat that accompanied him everywhere, Tekle Tsadik will be sadly missed by his sons and grandchildren, by his friends, and by all lovers of Ethiopian history. The Ethiopian scene will be the poorer for his passing.

Note. I should like to thank Dr. Šimälləs Täklä Šadəq for his reminiscences of his father and for factual information from his father's unpublished autobiography. I am also grateful to Professor Andreas Eshete, Professor Bahru Zewde, Dr. Haile Gabriel Dagne, Professor Richard Pankhurst, Ato Shiferaw Bekele and Dejazmatch Zewde Gabre-Sellassie for their reminiscences and insights.

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Tekle Tsadik also wrote a novel in about 1969, but was dissatisfied with it and burnt it.

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